

King County Reclaimed Water Comprehensive Plan Regional Participation Strategy

This document includes:

- Background information
- How the existing King County Reclaimed Water Program fits into the planning process
- Who has planning and approval authority regarding the Plan
- Regional participation & input in the planning process
- Objectives of regional participation
- Regional participation process structure
- Topics for regional input
- Individual regional leader and reclaimed water stakeholder discussions
- Regional leaders contact list
- List of additional reclaimed water stakeholder groups & individuals

Background

The Reclaimed Water Comprehensive Plan (Plan) will define King County's reclaimed water business plan both near term (next 10 years) and long term (next 30 years). The Plan is being developed to find ways to manage treated effluent as a water resource and reduces the amount of effluent discharged to Puget Sound from King County's wastewater treatment system.

Additionally, there is a significant interest in reclaimed water throughout the region. King County needs to respond to requests and opportunities for new reclaimed water projects in a systematic way. The Plan will identify:

- Priority uses of reclaimed water
- Regional issues related to developing our reclaimed water program including: public health, financial, environmental, and wastewater system operational issues
- Policies to guide implementation and financing of King County's future reclaimed water program

The Plan will incorporate information gathered through previous efforts and discussions, (such as the 2008 King County WTD Reclaimed Water Feasibility Study). King County also recognizes that through this regional participation process, we will solicit and receive a wide range of input—from high-level, regional policy suggestions to specific, quantitative data on potential uses. This range of input will help shape various aspects of the Plan. The Plan has a broader, all-encompassing intent than previous efforts, which were more specifically focused. The Plan will address effluent management and reduced reliance on the Puget Sound for discharge of effluent.

Existing Regional Reclaimed Water Program

King County's existing regional reclaimed water program is operational and has been developed over the past ten years. Operation and ongoing expansions of the program (e.g. completion of the south leg of the backbone from the Brightwater Plant) will continue while the Plan is being developed. However, new policies developed under the Plan may apply to future decisions regarding the existing program, including expansion.

To make use of the investments we have made, we are implementing the existing program and developing new customers near these sources of reclaimed water. Once the Plan is adopted, the existing program will be modified as necessary to be consistent with the new Plan.

Planning and Approval Authority

- The plan will be developed under the provisions of the Metro statute (RCW 35.58) for developing a water pollution abatement plan and King County Charter for developing or amending sewer comprehensive plans.
- Per the King County charter, the Executive develops and recommends comprehensive plans for review and final approval by the King County Council; the Regional Water Quality Committee shall review and make recommendations to the Council on the Plan prior to Council approval. The King County sewer comprehensive plan is a functional plan under the King County Comprehensive Plan.
- The adopted Plan would be approved by the Department of Ecology under Ecology's General Sewer Plan Requirements (WAC 173-240-050)

Regional Participation & Input in the Planning Process

Reclaimed water stakeholders (which includes both regional leaders, industrial and commercial organizations, targeted interest groups, organizations, individuals [i.e. MWPAAC, local jurisdictions, environmental groups, specific state legislators, etc.] and the general public) will be involved in the Plan development process through an integrated and parallel public involvement process (described in detail below).

- Stakeholders will be asked to provide input and advice for consideration by the decision-makers in the planning process.
- The planning process will include periods where stakeholders will be able to provide input and advice on the following:
 - Potential reclaimed water uses, locations, and volumes.
 - Input on developing policy criteria that will be used in the prioritization of uses within option areas; and, to evaluate facility alternatives to serve uses.
 - Input on the financing plan, including identifying potential revenue sources and cost allocation
 - Input on Plan policies, including financing policies, to guide implementation.
 - Provide review and comment on the Draft Plan
 - Provide input, review and comment on SEPA nonproject review form, scoping, and Draft EIS

Objectives of Regional Participation

- To build regional support for the Plan and use of reclaimed water among the stakeholder groups
- Facilitate a regional discussion about the benefits of reclaimed water and the best ways to achieve those benefits
- To share information with and solicit input from a broad range of stakeholders (water purveyors, wastewater utilities, environmental groups, tribal governments, locally elected officials, regulators, potential recreational users, agricultural and industry user groups, civic groups, and equity and social justice interests, etc)
- Ensure decision-makers are aware of stakeholder opinions as they finalize and implement the Plan
- Build better regional relationships
- Develop confidence in reclaimed water as a safe and reliable resource
- Further WTD's mission of "Creating resources from wastewater"

Regional Participation Strategy Structure

The regional participation strategy combines two components:

- 1) Regional leaders workshops and individual discussions
- 2) General public outreach

This strategy will allow the public involvement process to change and grow throughout the Plan development by allowing:

- The addition of participants over time based on areas of interest or expertise
- Multiple levels of input from organizational/agency leaders, staff, and subject experts
- Allows stakeholders to tailor their participation according to their interests

General Public Outreach

General public outreach activities may include:

- Speakers Bureau – presentations to interested organizations from project representatives
- Public meetings and workshops
- Plan web pages and information on the King County WTD web site (including frequently asked questions, goals of the Plan, Plan schedule/timeline, regional participation strategy, vocabulary, the Plan SEPA process, etc).
- General reclaimed water public education efforts to build familiarity with and support for reclaimed water
 - Incorporate appropriate reclaimed water questions into the King County WTD annual water quality survey (a survey of the public conducted every year to gather customer input on WTD's performance as an agency)
 - Include Plan information alongside reclaimed water marketing efforts at general public outreach opportunities (Farmer's markets, fairs, etc)
- Tours of existing reclaimed water projects in Washington state
- Coordination with the public outreach component of reclaimed water research and demonstration projects and programs

- Coordination with the national WaterReuse Symposium(s) and Conference(s) (National Conference is scheduled for Seattle in 2009)
- Public outreach activities as necessary for the Plan's integrated SEPA process and draft documents

Regional Leaders Outreach

Regional leaders are representatives for specific subset of stakeholders or organization. They are expected to bring a big-picture, regional perspective to the Plan discussions. Regional leaders play an instrumental role in serving as links between King County and the jurisdictions and interest groups they represent. It is expected that they will brief their organizations on the Plan development process underway, and share comments/perspectives from those groups as appropriate throughout the process.

Regional leader contacts will include representatives from water and sewer agencies, regulatory agencies, environmental groups, tribal interests, potential industry and recreational user groups, regional leaders, and representatives intended to ensure that the King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative is considered in the policy development and decision-making process. A stakeholder process that is not dependent on a stakeholder committee also allows other groups and individuals to be involved in the planning process

In addition to the regional leaders, there are reclaimed water stakeholders that may offer specific expertise or interest in reclaimed water. These stakeholders may be added to the regional leaders list or included in individual discussions and/or workshops about reclaimed water and the Plan as appropriate.

The regional leaders will provide high-level regional input and review on major components of the Plan, including:

- Identifying key issues for their respective stakeholder groups and/or the region
- Providing input on uses for reclaimed water in the region
- Reviewing and providing input on plans for informing and involving the public throughout the planning process
- Reviewing and providing input on project goals to guide the planning process
- Reviewing and providing input on draft policy criteria to guide the development of use alternatives (including community, technical, financial, and environmental considerations)
- Reviewing and providing input on draft policies to guide decision-making for future program
- Reviewing and providing input on analytical results and draft financing strategies to guide how future projects are paid for

Regional leader outreach activities will include:

- A letter from the King County Executive addressed to regional leaders introducing the start of the planning process and inviting them to participate.
- Individual discussions to be held throughout the process as necessary with regional leaders and other members of their organizations to focus in on specific areas of concern and interest. Information from these meetings, meetings with the general public and other stakeholder

meetings, including MWPAAC and its sub-committees will be incorporated into all aspects of the planning process.

- Approximately 2-3 information-sharing and discussion workshops that would focus on the following topics:
 - Draft project goals and draft policy criteria to guide evaluation process
 - Mid-process update to share information and solicit input on key issues and potential uses resulting from intensive stakeholder discussions
 - Policy development to guide decision-making for future program and financing plan development to guide how future projects are paid for
 - Key findings to include in Draft Plan and Draft EIS

Topics for Regional Input

- Where and when to make reclaimed water investments, including the prioritization of beneficial uses
- The goals to guide the development of RW options during planning
- Criteria to guide the selection of RW alternatives during planning
- Cost effectiveness threshold for RW distribution and use
- Developing an equitable distribution plan for RW (i.e., prorated based on what each member agency generates, based on a first in/first served approach, based on environmental need, etc.)
- How benefits should be quantified and distributed among member agencies and whether benefits could be shared. Provide guidance on how competitive interests should be resolved among member agencies.
- How future reclaimed water users can be ensured access and how, or if, new users affect distribution of costs.
- The amount and types of public education needed to foster trust in RW safety for humans and the environment.
- Funding and revenue sources for the county to pursue
- The appropriate water purveyor responsibilities for distribution, use, funding, construction, safety, etc.
- Appropriate funding or other incentives to encourage development of a distribution system.
- Prioritization or ranking of beneficial uses of RW in the region.
- Whether and under what conditions RW use should be mandated
- Whether and under what conditions RW should be used for groundwater recharge, aquifer recharge, wetland enhancement, and stream augmentation.

Individual Discussions

Individual meetings will be held throughout the process as necessary with regional leaders and other members of their organizations to focus in on specific areas of concern and interest. Information from these meetings and other stakeholder meetings, including MWPAAC and its sub-committees will be documented and incorporated into all aspects of the planning process.

This document contains a list of discussion questions, which are only a starting point for potential individual discussions. Other questions may be added or questions may be revised as

we learn more about potential reclaimed water interests/uses or community concerns. These questions, as well as the King County representative(s) conducting the discussion, would be tailored to the regional leader or stakeholder's background and interest in reclaimed water issues.

Individual discussions may also utilize information from previous reclaimed water planning efforts and stakeholder feedback as a starting point. King County representative(s) conducting the discussion may use maps or other discussion tools as appropriate.

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